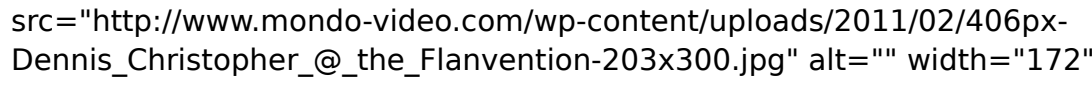


[406px-Dennis_Christopher_@_the_Flanvention](http://www.mondo-video.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/406px-Dennis_Christopher_@_the_Flanvention.jpg)
 Don't Cry It's Only Thunder

The Mondo Film & Video Guide
Interview with Dennis Christopher

Conducted By: Mondo Justin

Mondo Film & Video Guide
Editor

He jumped on a bicycle for the little 500 race in the 1979 film, BREAKING AWAY but he wasn't racing for just a trophy, he was really racing for a glory that all of us could understand and root for. BREAKING AWAY was the little film that could, and it's because of Dennis Christopher's performance, that the film was nominated for a Best Film Award at the Academy Awards in early 1980, and would win Dennis the British Academy Award afterward.

As a kid, my father forced me to watch BREAKING AWAY dozens of time to the point where I infinitely thought I would hate it forever. It was only many years later as a young adult that I truly realized what the film had to offer in terms of cinematic inspiration. BREAKING AWAY is the story of the human condition. It's the quintessential underdog story. It's the story of all our lives, and that of our fathers, and the generations preceding. It's a tale of class struggle, and at the time no one in Hollywood was making this type of statement. It is one of the best films ever made. This film is Dennis Christopher.

He was born Dennis Carrelli on December 2, 1955 to a modest sized Italian family in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. At an early age, Dennis knew that his life's path would be that of actor, and we here at the Mondo Film & Video Guide are grateful that he did just that.

Christopher's performances in films of the '70s and '80s like, BREAKING AWAY, FADE TO BLACK, CALIFORNIA DREAMING and DON'T CRY IT'S ONLY THUNDER should be considered as - simply important to film history. These are performances - major achievements

that are often overlooked at times and foolishly forgotten by some, but for us here remain truly big, essential and wondrous. Christopher would go on in the '90s and follow into current decades garnering acclaim on the theater stage in New York and Los Angeles, as well as appearing in countless overlooked films. In addition, Christopher has remained very busy appearing in various television series over the years from everything from, C.S.I to DEADWOOD and the amazing and sorely missed HBO drama, SIX FEET UNDER. </p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">Dennis Christopher is by far one of most under-rated actors of his time. His work has a very unique quality to it, and the film work that he has done to date, would NOT have been so wonderful had it not been for his contributions to it. For us here at The Mondo Film & Video Guide, Dennis Christopher is one of the greatest character actors of all time.</p>

What were you like as a kid, growing up in Philly?

<p style="text-align: justify;">I was the last born in the my family. My father was Italian, and my mother was Irish, 2nd generation. Their parents were born over in Europe. I wasn't an athletic kid. Which is funny considering the first few movies that I did were about athletics. Aside from the period where I thought I wanted to be a priest in grade school, after that I was always involved in the school productions. Plays and musicals like that. I think doing that was someway an extension of me wanting to be a priest though. But of course, puberty set in and all bets were off for me being a priest.</p>

You started acting very early, where does that interest in acting come from?

<p style="text-align: justify;">Who the hell knows. I think for most actors... I mean, if I can speak for other people, part of being an invisible person has something to do with it. The chance to express yourself. As a kid I always felt invisible cause I was the last born, and my parents thought they couldn't conceive any more children. </p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">I was an outsider too, definitely an outsider growing up. It seemed like the outsiders were all artistic. I'm not sure really. Someone once asked me why I became an actor, and I told them that I wanted a 'witness' to my life. That was sort of the answer that

came off the top of my head without thinking..and I think it's kinda true.

[!\[\]\(1d3a1175dd4902218e694b9c098adb83_img.jpg\)How did you get involved in your first film, BLOOD AND LACE?](http://www.mondo-video.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/BLood.jpg)

That was so long ago, I don't know if I can remember... I think I had just turned seventeen, I had just left home. I had a court struggle with my dad, my mother had already passed on. I had myself declared an emancipated minor. I had been supporting myself for the few previous years prior, cause that's what you have to do in order to prove to the courts that you can be an emancipated minor. I wanted to be an actor. I thought that I was an actor, but I decided to try college out. I paid for my own college. I went for one semester, and then saw my grades, and said 'what the hell am I doing this for?' So, by the time I turned 18, I sold everything I had, and I moved out to California.

One day I picked up the trade paper, and I was looking through the production listings. I saw this little thing about BLOOD AND LACE So I did what I was doing everyday, and I put in my resume, and they called me in. I auditioned and I got the part.

The outstanding thing about working BLOOD AND LACE was the fact that I got to work with an actress named Gloria Grahame. She was an academy award nominated actress, that got nominated for THE BAD & THE BEAUTIFUL. I was the only person there that knew so she even was. I think they looked at her like she was just this old lady, but to me, she was a heavyweight. I would spend every day talking to her at lunch, asking her about the director's she had worked with, and the leading men she worked with. She worked with Humphrey Bogart. She was just the sweetest lady.

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Even though it's uncredited, you got to

be in Fellini's ROMA. I was curious to see what it was like to be around him, however short of a time it may have been for?

<p style="text-align: justify;">Well, I fell in with this girl at the time and she was going to Europe on a charter flight. I had never been to Europe. She had, and she had filled my head with all these stories. So she took off, but she didn't know that I had bought a one way ticket to go to on the same flight. So we went. Also, I was desperate to be a hippie. Which was over with in the United States. Also, I had a secret desire to meet Fellini that I never told to anyone but her.</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">I eventually got to France, and I got a job as a PA on a film that was directed by Claude Chabrol. Actually I got the P.A. job on the film cause of Anthony Perkins. Prior to coming to Europe, I was working in Los Angeles at this health food store. Perkins used to come in all the time, cause he was a advocate of health food, and we got to talking a lot. So in France I saw him, and I found out that he was shooting this film, and it was Perkins that got myself and my girlfriend jobs on this movie..</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">After that adventure was over, I hitchhiked to Rome. My very first night there, my girlfriend and I were sitting at this cafe with the people we hitchhiked to Rome with. There was this beautiful girl that was walking barefoot down the street. She was the most beautiful girl I had ever seen. So I said, 'excuse me' to the people I was with, and took off following her. I tried to follow her, but I got lost, and I walked onto this movie set. I realized that there in front of me was Fellini. I flipped out, ducked under a barricade, and accidentally walked into the middle of a scene that was being shot. Fellini was quite angry. I was dragged down this alley around the corner, and I was freaking out. I was in a foreign country, and I was separated from the girl I was with. I didn't know where I was, didn't know how to get back to the cafe I had left.</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">So after like twenty minutes, Fellini came walking down the alley towards me. He had this big black cape and black hat on. It was so cinematic, and the movie lights from the set were shining behind him. I really thought he was gonna kill me. I'm this guy dressed in hippie clothes. I guess from the way I looked he must have thought I was either American or English. He walked up to me and said in English, 'what was so important that you had to ruin my movie?'</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">I could barely speak, and I just blurted out like a school kid visiting the principal's office for the

first time, 'Mr. Fellini, I had a dream about you...' That was all he needed to here. ROMA was his movie about his youth, re-constructed by using his dreams that he had wrote down in a dream journal. We talked for about an half an hour about dreams, and clowns, stones and colors, all this stuff. He told me to come back the next night wearing the same clothes that I had on. That was it, I had a job. I worked for Fellini for like six weeks or something. We always filmed at night. He had his chair roped off away from everyone. He had what he called, 'his dream people' and he only admitted these people inside this rope, and he allowed me there. </p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">The people he let in were all these people you see in his movies from the beautiful to the grotesque. It's people that he used to create his dreams, and he had labeled me one of them. So on my first night in Rome I had steady work. I think we became kinda close. I think he took comfort in me, cause he always spoke Italian to me, and I didn't know what the hell he was saying. I heard from an A.D, who was English, that I reminded him of his wife, whom which he introduced me to once. It was a very high point in my life.</p>

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What was it like working with Robert Altman?

<p style="text-align: justify;">Well I worked with him twice, and that too was a high point in my life. What had happened, is that I went up to visit Shelley Duvall on the set of 3 WOMEN and I met Robert Altman. And he put me in the movie. I have that nice scene in the movie at the end with Shelley and Sissy. And from there, Altman hired me to do A WEDDING. I had a wonderful part in that film. There were thirty-two main characters in that film, and the character's were largely improved. We all received a background on who our character's were, and some information on what Altman wanted to see from those characters. He gave us all a certain time frame to come up with what you were gonna do, and then you'd present your ideas to the writers. </p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">All my ideas for my character were used in the film, even the ideas I came up with for scenes that I wasn't in, got used. He was so encouraging. He created such an amazing atmosphere on the set. Altman had six cameras running all the time, and he was


always quick to mention to everyone how great your idea was if you came up with something great. If you had a bad idea, he'd mention that too of course. Altman was one of the greatest guys I've ever met in my entire life. I miss him. I'd give anything to be able to spend one more day on a set with Bob Altman.

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How did you come to be involved with BREAKING AWAY?

Peter Yates and Steve Tesich had seen A WEDDING before it was released. Altman was with the same agency as them. They liked me, and during one of many re-writes they wrote 'Cyril' with me in mind. So I went in for a pre-read - it's where they have like the movie stars in there reading the script together. It's not like a audition or casting session with a lot of people. So I went to that, and took my turn. Then they told me that the part was mine. So I started reading 'Cyril' with all these actors that were auditioning. I'd read with a group of three guys. Then they would walk out, but I'd stay. Then another three would come in a read, and I'd read 'Cyril.'

One thing about this was that you were just reading scenes. There was no way that you could actually tell what character had the lead, cause all the boys were so evenly distributed in the between the four boys. You had no way to know, you really couldn't even tell what the story was all about.

[breakingaway.jpg](http://www.mondo-video.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/breakingaway.jpg)
 So on the second day of this, they started to get backed up out in the waiting room, and in the next group of guys that came in, one kid was late. So I think Peter said to me, "would you mind reading the part of Dave." So I read the parts of 'Dave' and 'Cyril.' Reading 'Dave', I thought the character was really weird. He was talking about shaving his legs, and he was talking fake Italian. When I got to the Italian part I had some fun with it. They didn't know that I was actually half-Italian, cause I had changed my name. They didn't know that I had lived in Rome.

<p style="text-align: justify;">After it was over, they had the next boys come in, and they had me stay and read 'Dave' again, and then the day was over. A couple days later, I got a call from my agent, and she told me that she had a deal memo on her desk for a project called, BAMBINO. This was the original title for BREAKING AWAY. So, I said, "great, I got the part of Cyril." She said, "no, it's for the part of Dave." I didn't want to do 'Dave.' I thought he was too weird, he wanted to shave his legs, and he's spouting Italian all the time, and he was terrible. I thought he was sorta like a cartoon, and I didn't know how I would play him. </p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">My agent accepted the deal memo, and begged me to do it. Plus, she said, "I think this is the lead." She asked me over and over to do it, so I said,"OK, I'll do it." I was working on another movie at the time, so I actually missed all the rehearsals and the first week of shooting. </p>

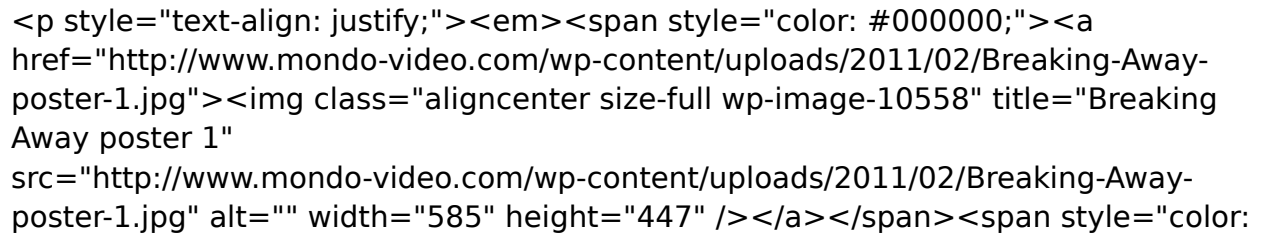
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<p style="text-align: justify;">When I got to Bloomington, Indiana I figured out a way into the character and made it my own. It sort of happened right away. They had a completely different idea of the character, and we shot it their way for one day. They had died my hair dark, they put this dark orange make-up on me, gave me a high collar shirt, and they put these tight pants on me. I looked like a reject from SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER. They had him smoking pot in the back of a van. It just wasn't what I had in mind for the character. I didn't think he wanted to be Italian cause he wanted to get laid, I thought he wanted to be Italian cause he thought he was part of a loving family. Anyhow, we started to look at the rushes and it just wasn't working. So they came to me and say, "we need to talk about what you had in mind for this character."</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">The whole time I was saying, "No, No that's too sleazy." This was the type of Italian they were going for. It was awful. I said to them, "This guy wants to be Italian cause he wants a large family. He wants the traditional Italian thing." I think that had a real impact on Steve and on Peter. </p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">Changes were made to the script. The next thing I know we started re-shooting everything

we had shot already. I asked that it be my own hair color. They weren't even sure what this new version of the character would wear. I said, 'I know what he'd wear.' The producers sent someone back to Los Angeles to my apartment to get my own clothes that I had suggested. Everything I wore in the movie was my own, except for the bicycle clothes.

It worked out well, it made the character more innocent. The Italian influence had an impact on all the characters in the movie. It deepened out the whole thing. It came together. It was such a magical sort of coming to together of all the people involved. Steven was such a great writer. I mean, the bare bones of it all was already there. I mean, no one in America at the time was doing a movie about class struggle. Peter was English, so he was well aware of class struggles. It was really interesting. The movie really holds up yet.

You won a British Academy Award for your performance as 'Dave', right?

Yes, I did. Steven won best writer too. Our little movie was up for "Best Picture" at the Academy Awards. This little movie going up against all these big films. Peter was up for "Best Director." Steven was up for "Best Screenplay" Barbara Berry was up for "Best Supporting Actress." It was great, we did pretty good.

Working with a great cast like you had on BREAKING AWAY, do you guys all form a bond, and become friends after production is over?

Dennis and I were very close at the time. We had did a film called, 9-30-55 together. So we had already spent a lot of time on location together. At the time he was married to an actress named, P.J Soles. So we became all very close. All of us were very close during shooting.

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Over the years, you've worked with Paul Dooley many times in the father/son combo. Do you think you guys have a certain chemistry together?

<p style="text-align: justify;">One interesting thing, Paul wasn't a first choice for BREAKING AWAY. They originally wanted Charles Durning. I had worked with Paul on A WEDDING, he played my dad. I was in the office one day before this table reading, and they wanted Charles Durning to come in, but he wouldn't without a offer on the table. There were money things, and he was busy doing something else. So I said, "I know this guy who played my father in A WEDDING and I'm sure he'll come in and do it, if you pay him." They said, "even if he has no chance of getting the part?" I said, "Yes, IF YOU PAY HIM, I'm sure he'll do it, even if you don't give him the part. " So they called him, and he came in. So we got to the end of the table read, and there was no question, that part belonged to Paul Dooley. There was no discussion about it.</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">We've played father and son at least three times. There is an very easy chemistry between us. There are some very poignant moments between us in BREAKING AWAY. I think these came from our connection together. Paul really identified with my character. As a youth he really thought that he had the same kind of relationship with his own father, that 'Dave' had with his father. There are a couple really sweet moments that weren't scripted that just came out of us working together. We fit very well together. I really love Paul Dooley.</p>

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So are some of your scenes with Dooley some of your favorite scenes from 'Breaking Away?'

<p style="text-align: justify;">Certainly. But it's so hard to tell. I don't know if I have a real favorite scene. I've never worked so hard in my fucking life. BREAKING AWAY was my first leading role. I was always working, non stop. I was either working on the bicycle, or I was working with the opera teacher, cause of that opera I sang in the movie. </p>

<p style="text-align: justify;"><a

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Usually you have down time in a movie, if you're a supporting character. I was always working, cause I was the lead, there was no down time for me. You really grow up fast, when you're in almost every scene. People always ask me if I had fun making that movie. I say, "no, not for me." It was hard work. My idea of fun is staying in bed on Sunday with the New York Times with a toasted bagel and lox. That's my idea of fun. Rewarding, Yes. Stimulating, Yes. Hard Work. Yeah. Satisfying. Yeah. Fun, No. It was a little scary on that bike. That bike weighed about as much as a bag of pretezels. I mean, I'm no athlete. I was putting down a cigarette and getting up on that bike. That scene in the race where I gashed my leg, that really happened. The other racers weren't actors either, they were really just trying to win that race, they weren't concerned on hitting any type of mark, or having to be behind me at ant certain time. It was scary. They shot that gun off to start the race, and you saw my blood shortly thereafter.</p>

So how did you get cast in FADE TO BLACK?

<p style="text-align: justify;">A week after BREAKING AWAY opened in New York, I went skiing, and had a terrible accident. I broke my leg in four places, and I got put into traction for a month, then they put me into a wheelchair, and I had to spend another month in a bent cast on my leg for a month or so after that.. When BREAKING AWAY came out I had a big article in People Magazine. So there I am in my big People Magazine article in a wheelchair vacuuming my loft in New York. So, there was a gap. I couldn't work, it was very frustrating. I was offered this movie called, FADE TO BLACK. I thought it was a fascinating premise, but something about it seemed kinda sketchy, the script wasn't really up to par. So I said no. </p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">Every time I said no, they would offer me more money to do it. I really meant it, it wasn't a bargaining ploy. Finally my agent called me, and said, "Dennis they wanna give you your name over the title, and they wanna give you creative input, and a whole bunch of money." So I said, 'Fine, if they're gonna give me creative input. OK" Finally, Linda Carriage called me and she had already been cast in the film. I knew of her from seeing her picture in a magazine prior were she was all dressed up like Marilyn Monroe and I couldn't take my eyes off her. So I met her for a drink, and I fell head over heels for her.</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">I met with the

writer and director of the film, and we broke the script down. I said to him, "this scene is a great idea, but the dialogue is shit. What did you do re-write this thing for a bunch of different investors?" He did. So we went through and attacked every scene. For example, that scene were I masterbate to the Marilyn Monroe picture. In the script, originally Eric's aunt leaves and he started to waltz around the room with a life size cut out image of Marilyn Monroe. So I said to the director, "what does this mean? Does this mean that he's alone now, he can turn the music up, and have his fantasy without it being interrupted?" It didn't make sense to me." So the director asked me what I would do. So I said, "I'm gonna do what every single man in America and the world would do, I'm gonna jerk off!" Marilyn Monroe was always marginalized as a sex symbol. So that's what I did to her. That's why after - I said, "Sorry Marilyn."

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One thing I want to mention about FADE TO BLACK. At the time, I was good friends with Chris Stein and Debbie Harry from the band, Blondie. Chris wrote a theme to 'ADE TO BLACK. Chris Stein is a fantastic composer. Anyhow, the director didn't even use it! I couldn't believe it. Talk about a wasted opportunity. If you're familiar with the Blondie album, "Autoamerican", the first song, that very long orchestral piece is the theme to FADE TO BLACK that Chris wrote. Had they used it, can you imagine what kind of lyric's Debbie would've came up with for that piece of music?

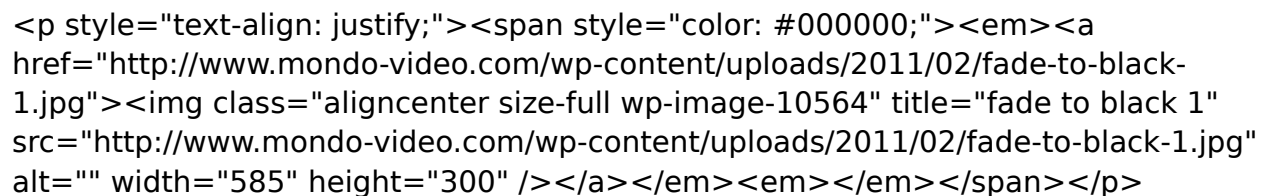
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Where do you think 'Eric Binford' comes from inside you?

Again, I did a lot of work on the script for FADE TO BLACK. Also, all the things that are stuck up on the walls in Eric's room I put those up. When I first walked on that set, they only had two movie posters on the wall. I said, "what the fuck is this? He's supposed to be a total movie buff extraordinaire and he's only got two crappy movie posters on his wall?" They told me that they couldn't afford to have more, cause having a

movie poster on your wall on film meant you had to get a clearance, you had to pay money. So I asked, "do you have to have a clearance to use pictures from a magazine?" They said, "No." So I had my assistant go to my apartment, and grab every magazine I had, and bring them back to the set, and I spent that entire day cutting out and pasting up pictures on that wall." I decorated that whole set.

Ultimately, I just identified with him, I loved movies too. In the original script, he was just a killer. It didn't make any sense. You just don't become a murderer on a Tuesday. So I said, let's just have the aunt - who's really his mother - comes in and break his projector. Originally I was supposed to throw her down the stairs. I said, it's a perfect opportunity. Let's just re-create the scene with Richard Widmark that Eric's watching when his projector gets broken. I said, 'he shouldn't push her down the stairs, she knocks over the projector, he picks it up, and he finds the electric cord in his hand, just like in the movie he's watching, and he should just push the wheelchair in anger, and it should start rolling toward the open door.'

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Instead of stopping the wheelchair from rolling down the stairs and preventing this horrific accident, he goes into a psychotic state and he thinks he's Richard Widmark in that movie, and for the first time in his life, he's feeling powerful. If you watch the movie, you'll see it, he doesn't push her down those stairs. So when he went into that state of mind, the movie that he was watching started to become real around him.

Same thing, when I'm Dracula. In the original script I was just supposed to murder her, and bite her neck and drink her blood. I said, "No..I don't murder her. I don't have fangs, how the hell am I gonna bite a big chunk out of someone's neck?" I told the director I wanted to chase her, like a kid in a Halloween costume, and she falls. Where she trips on a kid's toy and impales herself in the neck. I came up with all that shit. They put that in the script. At this point, there's been two deaths, and they're sorta by accident, but Eric feels great. So by the time Mickey Rourke starts fucking with him, he says "OK...now I'm gonna get back at everyone that's ever done me wrong, and I'm gonna do it by re-creating scenes from my favorite movies."

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So did you come up with the make-up for the Dracula section of the film?

<p style="text-align: justify;">Yes, I did. I think I put everything into it, cause I wanted to save my reputation and the movie. Even the ending at Grauman's Chinese wasn't in the script. In the original script, it just ended in a shootout. So I thought, what would Eric wanna do? How would he end it cinematically? I thought, the only thing he would want to do, would be to get back into the screen. He wanted to be in the movies he loved. </p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">Didn't you actually come up with a concept for a sequel to FADE TO BLACK?</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;"> I did, I wrote FADE TO BLACK 2. I had the character that Linda Carriage played coming back. She goes completely insane, and she becomes Eric Binford sort of. It's a big case in Los Angeles. This guy is shot off the rooftop of Grauman's Chinese Theater and he dies on the footprints of Marilyn Monroe. There gonna make a television movie about the story. They hire actor Dennis Christopher to play Eric Binford. Things ensue. Linda starts to go off the deep end. It was shot down instantly by the producers. It's too bad cause there was a window of opportunity there, but that's since long gone passed.</p>

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<p style="text-align: justify;">After FADE TO BLACK you did an AMAZING film called, DON'T CRY IT'S ONLY THUNDER. Talk about an under-rated film. How was that experience for you?</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">Yeah, it's fabulous. It got bungled at distribution. It's a fantastic movie. It was one of the very first movies about Vietnam. It's about a guy in Vietnam. The script was written by a guy named, Paul Hensler. He was Francis Ford Coppola's right hand man on APOCALYPSE NOW.</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;"> This film was his story. He was in Vietnam, and Coppola had encouraged him to write his about his experiences. It's got a hell of a title doesn't it? When people saw it, people were raving about it. The New York Times review for the film was a LOVE LETTER. Instead of having it distributed by a company like Paramount or something they chose this Japanese company for it. </p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">In fact, the company that was supposed to distribute it is the same company that makes, "Hello Kitty." These guys had no clue how to distribute a film. This film was the first theatrical film to be shown on HBO. It only played in theater's for two weeks in New York and L.A. I had to BEG them for that, so we could get Academy Award Consideration. So when it went to HBO, it looked like HBO had produced it. So that was a killer for us. </p>

<p style="text-align: justify;"><iframe title="YouTube video player" src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/GhNRKTvnpwU" frameborder="0" width="585" height="300"></iframe></p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">So what about Stephen King's IT?</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">Yeah, they just offered me it. That film is very dear to a lot of people. My character was just so weird. He had this weird thing going on with his mother, and this weird sexual thing. But all that was cut out. Everyone's story was there but Eddie Spaghetti's. They kept saying that there wasn't any time for his back story so I said, "look you

can do it all in one broad stroke. What if he's a thirty-five year old virgin?" They all looked at me. Eddie is the first one killed by the monster. I was the virgin sacrifice. I loved working with all those guys too. I had worked with John Ritter once before. I had worked with Richard Thomas once before. Tim Curry was great too, he has legendary status. I couldn't even believe that I was working with him. He was also a great guy to have a drink with in the bar after a hard day of shooting.

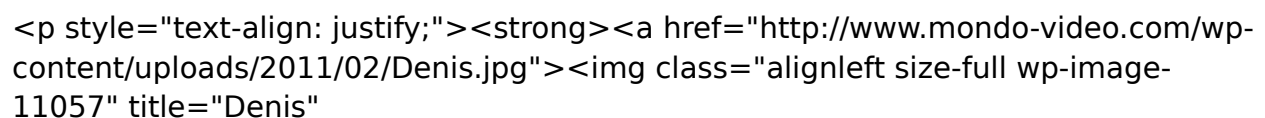
I really love the commentary you and John Ritter did for the DVD release of IT.

Yeah, that was great. We were the only ones that showed up to do that. I had worked with John once before on a short lived television series called, HOOPERMAN. We got kinda close on that. At that time I had never done television before, but the script was great. John was really fabulous. We did that commentary for 'IT' about three months before he passed away.

<http://www.mondo-video.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/cooltext504296553.png>  src="http://www.mondo-video.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/cooltext504296553.png" alt="" width="554" height="41" /> <http://www.youtube.com/embed/Rrrga3j7KCs>  src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/Rrrga3j7KCs" frameborder="0" width="585" height="300"/>

What's your favorite movie of all time?

Of all time? A PLACE IN THE SUN. That's my favorite of all time movie. I can see it over and over again. I became an actor cause of a movie called, THE ROBE. I was a tiny little kid, like five or something when I saw it. We watched it on television, I remember it was on around Easter time. When I was young I thought movies were real. I thought they were documentaries. When I saw this actor, 'Jay Robinson' as Caligula in THE ROBE. I just thought he was the most evil person I had ever seen in my life. I was freaked out. My older brother explained to me that it wasn't real. I said to him, "you mean that guy wasn't real?" I knew I wanted to do that. It's funny. I wasn't influenced by cowboy movies or gangster movies...laughing It was a sword and sandal movie...laughing

<http://www.mondo-video.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Denis.jpg>  src="http://www.mondo-video.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Denis.jpg" alt=""

width="247" height="211" />Isn't it frustrating to you, the fact that you're so under-used as an actor?</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">I have a wonderful life that I love. I've worked with a lot of fucking amazing people. There is a mold that I just don't fit. I really don't know. If you're asking me if I'm frustrated I'd say, maybe a little bit. But again, I have a life that I love, and things in my life fill me up, that have nothing to do with the business. I'm really grateful for everything that's happened to me, the opportunities that I've had in my career to date. I'm working on a couple theater projects that I'm writing now, and I'm doing those for myself at the moment. I wanna live day to day, so I'm really getting more satisfaction from that now.</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">You've done a lot of theater as well, between film projects. Is theater work more fulfilling to you than film work?</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">Yeah. I've done a lot of theater in between. I've done three Broadway shows. I've originated the parts in several plays. Doing theater is a completely different animal. You do all the work in rehearsal. Then every night you go in, and you've got two and a half hours of just rocking and rolling. You're surfing on the audience reaction. It's just amazing. I did LITTLE FOXES for almost a year that way. </p>

<p style="text-align: justify;"><iframe title="YouTube video player" src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/JhZQZoMOqMc" frameborder="0" width="585" height="300"></iframe></p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">Last year, you worked on the new Henry Jaglom film as well, QUEEN OF THE LOT. How did you find working with Henry in comparison to other directors you've worked with?</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">Oh that was quite an experience! I got to work with my friend, Noah Wyle too. I've directed Noah in two plays. I've known Henry for years. We have mutual friends in common. Henry loves movies. He loves to talk about movies. He knows about movies. It's always a turn on talking to Henry about movies. Henry's always had the luxury of being on the outside of the establishment. He just called me up and asked me to be in the movie. How could you say no? How can you say no to Henry Jaglom?</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;"><a href="http://www.mondo-video.com/wp-

content/uploads/2011/02/Dennis.jpg">The dialogue for the most part was all improv, and it's very stimulating working with Henry. Kinda different than working with someone like Robert Altman. Don't ask me why, cause I can't pin point it. But, working with Henry is really great.</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">What's one thing that nobody knows about you?</p>

<p style="text-align: justify;">Well...I've just spent two hours telling you all kinds of things haven't I? I suppose I could tell you about a time spent in an Italian prison with Pere Clement, but I won't. I wanna save that story for the book.....</p>